

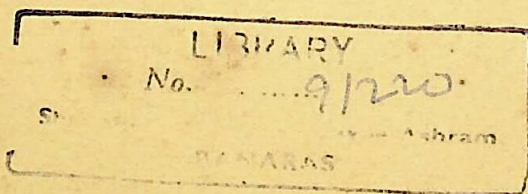
EAST AND WEST SERIES

Nos. 196-197

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PICTURES
FROM MYSTICS
[Second Series]



T. L. VASWANI

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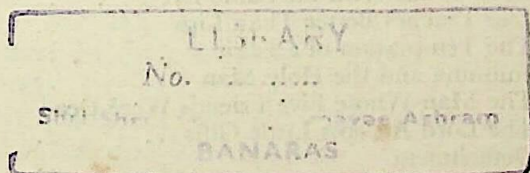
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PICTURES FROM MYSTICS

[Second Series]

By

T. L. VASWANI



**GITA PUBLISHING HOUSE,
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Poona-1, [India].**

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IMPORTANT

Kindly note that this is a combined issue for the two months,—January and February, 1974.

Our next issue will be out in the month of March, 1974.

—The Manager

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Shri Shri Ma Anandamayee Ashram

BANARAS

FOREWORD

Saints and sages and seers, mystics and men of God and servants of suffering humanity have appeared in all ages and climes. They are the monopoly of no one country or race or religion. They all belong to the one universal brotherhood of service. Their lives are rooted in the love of God and Man. For them to live is to love and serve. They radiate the light of purity and peace,—the purity which beholds God face to face and the peace which belongs to those whose hearts are free from all save God.

They all are men and women of fire. For “God is an infinite fire of love.” They live and move and have their being in infinite love. This is what makes them fearless. And being fearless, they walk the way of sacrifice. In the darkness of this world they serve as lamps that “hold the light to those who lose the way.” And in the ocean of life,—the sea of transmigration,—they are as boats and bridges to those “who long for the other shore.”

During their life-times, some of the great ones received recognition. Multitudes, we read, followed Krishna and Christ, Buddha and Baba Nanak, wherever they went. There were other great ones who lived hidden lives, doing their work in quiet corners, far from madding crowds. But whether they lived in obscurity or faced the lime-light; all the great ones captured the hearts of those who came in contact with them. A magnetic influence moved out of them. And

whosoever entered their magnetic fields felt irresistibly drawn to them.

In the lives and teachings of all the great ones, there is emphasis on detachment. Detachment is desirelessness. Conquer desire, and there is nothing left for you to conquer. For the greatest victory man can win is over himself. "How long, O man, will thy heart slumber?" are the words in an ancient Jewish scripture. "When wilt thou wake from thy sleep? The world's battles leaving, strengthen thyself, and fight with thy desire a goodly fight." The heart must become empty of all created things before life can be offered as a sacrifice unto the Eternal. And detachment,—in all the great ones,—is blended with sympathy and compassion. For the world is sad, is broken, is filled with tragedy and tears. And men and women walk in darkness. Humanity is as an infant crying in the night, crying for the light.

Mystics and men of God come as light-bringers, torch-bearers. They come to dispel our darkness and lead us out of the night into the new morning light. Their lives are as picture-galleries, replete with pictures of fascinating beauty. Some of these pictures,—culled from the writings of Beloved Dadaji (Sri T. L. Vaswani), who himself was a mystic and servant of suffering humanity,—have been brought together in the following pages, in the hope that they will inspire some to live the true life, the life that is life indeed,—the life of longing and love,—deep yearning for the "First and only Fair," and love for suffering creation.

J. P. VASWANI

Pictures From Mystics

PICTURES FROM MYSTICS

THE TRUE DEVOTEE

Some disciples said to Ahmed :—"Master! tell us about a true devotee of the Lord."

"Then listen," he said. "Bahram was my neighbour. He became my friend. He was a wealthy merchant. His caravans carried for sale in foreign lands goods worth lakhs of rupees, every year.

"One day, his caravans were looted by robbers on the way. Bahram suffered loss to the tune of several lakhs. I went to console him. I arrived as the sun was setting. Famine was in the land. Bahram thought I, like others, was in the hope of dining. Bahram asked a servant to bring meals for me.

"I said to him :—"Brother, don't trouble! I came not in the hope of having meals, but to sympathise with you in your great loss."

"And Bahram said :—"Yes, it is true I have lost lakhs. But I feel grateful to God. The robbers looted my goods : thank God, I have looted none. The robbers have robbed a portion of my perishable wealth, but they have not touched the Treasure Imperishable,—the Treasure of Faith in Allah, the Compassionate. It is the true Treasure of life!" "

After relating this, Ahmed turned to his disciples and said :—"This Bahram is a true devotee of the Lord!"

WHERE IS YOUR ALLAH ?

A sceptic comes to Mahomed and says :—
“Where is your Allah? We do not see Him!”
' Mahomed quietly takes up a lump of earth and throws it at the man. He is wild with rage : he runs to the Prophet's relatives, to complain to them of Mahomed's conduct.

The man confronts him again in the Kaaba. Then Mahomed says to him quietly :—“You say you do not see God and, therefore, you do not believe in Him. I flung at you the lump of earth. You say it caused you pain, but I did not see your pain!”

The man comes to his senses and says to Mahomed :—“Yes, now I know. You meant no harm. You threw the lump of earth at me to answer my question.”

NIMAI'S CHOICE

Nimai (Shri Chaitanya) was a strange child. He was a few months old when his father placed before him rupees, pice, grain, clothes, weapons and books and said to him :—“Child, take what you will!”

Quickly, Nimai placed his hand on the Book,—the Bhagavad Gita.

The father, the mother and all others who were present were filled with joy and they exclaimed :—
“Nimai will be a man of learning!”

Yes,—Nimai became a lover of the Book,— the Gita,—and a lover of the Lord. Nimai became

a Teacher of the Book to India's multitudes. And Nimai drew crowds of men and women to the Lord of Love.

THE VISION OF THE PUNDIT

A pundit has finished his bath in the Ganges and is returning home. On the way, he sees a brahmin. The brahmin is a pilgrim. His face is radiant, and he wears a *tulsi-mala* (garland of tulsi-beads). On his lips is the Name of the Lord.

The pundit bows down to the brahmin and, learning that the brahmin is a stranger to the place, requests him, saying :—"Come with me and be my guest these few days." The brahmin consents.

On reaching his house, the pundit, according to the rites of hospitality, washes the brahmin's feet and sprinkles the water on his own head and his wife and children.

The pundit next offers food to the brahmin. The brahmin says :—"I cook my own food!" So the pundit brings rice, *dal*, vegetables and potatoes. The brahmin prepares his food. Then, on broad palm leaves, he spreads out his food and, closing his eyes, offers a prayer, dedicating the food to the Lord. He has not finished his prayer when he hears gentle footfalls. He opens his eyes and sees that a child is there, eating of the rice, *dal* and potatoes offered to the Lord! The brahmin cries aloud :—"Alas, my food-offering is spoiled!"

The child runs away. The pundit and his wife run to the spot. To them the brahmin says :—

Pictures From Mystics

"Don't be angry with the child! Don't beat him! What does the child know? My food-offering is spoilt, but don't worry. Bring me a few grains : I shall eat them and drink water."

The pundit and his wife are sad. They press the brahmin to cook again and have his food. The pundit's wife brings rice and other things. The brahmin has another bath and now sits to cooking again.

It is 4 p. m. The mother holds the child near her. The brahmin's food is ready. The mother is called in : she goes into a room and returns in a few minutes. The child has vanished.

As the brahmin has closed his eyes and is offering the food to the Lord, gentle footfalls are heard again. The brahmin sees the child is eating of the rice, *dal*, vegetables and potatoes. The child feels happy. The brahmin says :—"It was fated so! My food-offering is spoiled again."

The pundit and his wife are now on the spot to see what the child has done. They seize the child, and the brahmin says :—"I will not let you beat this child! What does the child know? The fates will not let me eat food, today. Don't worry! Give me sweets or a few grains of gram and water. I shall cook again tomorrow!"

The pundit and his wife implore the brahmin, saying :—"Our hearts are sad. They will not be glad until you eat food. Do cook again,—for our satisfaction!"

Rice, *dal* and vegetables and potatoes are brought in again, and the child is bound with a rope. The brahmin bathes again and sits to cooking, a third time. The food is ready. The brahmin

closes his eyes to offer prayers and dedicate the food to the Lord, when lo and behold! the Lord, Sri Krishna, stands before the brahmin, playing upon the flute. And the Lord smiles and says :—"You called me, and I came twice to you in the form of a child, but you knew Me not! Yet I know your devotion is beautiful. Ask of Me what you will!"

The brahmin is dumb-founded. With folded hands, he speaks to the Lord :—"O *Purushottama*, wonderful is Thy *māyā*! How can I, an humble brahmin, know Thee, Lord! Neither *tapas*¹ nor *dhyāna*², neither *japa*³ nor *dāna*⁴, have I done, O Lord! Thy mercy fills me, and I but gaze at Thee in speechless wonder. I have done nothing, O Lord! And Thou dost grant me Thy vision! And Thou dost ask me to ask of Thee a boon. What shall I ask? So bless me, Lord! that Thy Beauteous Face may fill the Temple of my Heart, for ever!"

"So be it!" saith the Lord. And the vision vanishes!

Then the brahmin eats his food in great joy and in his heart bows down to the Face of the child and goes to bed.

Early in the dawn, the brahmin awakes. The pundit and his wife, also, awake in the dawn. And the brahmin says to the pundit :—"Yours is no ordinary child. Your child is a *rupa* (form) of the Lord. So the Lord told me when, in His mercy, He granted me His vision, last night!"

A few days stayed the brahmin in the pundit's house. And, every day, he bowed down to the

1. Austerity. 2. Meditation. 3. Repetition of the Holy Name.
4. Charity.

child and had the child's benedictions. And in the brahmin's heart the child's face was radiant forever.

The child was Nimai (Sri Chaitanya), and the pundit was Nimai's father, Jagannath Misra, and the pundit's wife was Nimai's mother, Sacchi Devi.

THE MISSION OF MAHOMED

"Allah is great!" teaches Mahomed. The rich merchants of Arabia,—the members of the Koreish tribe,—believe differently. Wealth is power, they say. There is, inevitably, a conflict between the revolutionary Prophet and the rich merchants. Yet what does it profit a man to gain the whole world and lose his soul?

Most of Mahomed's followers are poor. But they are sinewy men,—sturdy, strong. How may they resist the might of the wealthy? There are fights in the narrow streets of Mecca, and many of these poor people are beaten, until their heads are broken and blood flows in the streets.

Mahomed is unable to give protection to his poor disciples: and Mahomed's heart is heavy-laden. He looks at the eternal heavens above. He prays to Allah. He ponders deeply over the matter. He arrives at the conclusion that where resistance is weak, it is right to run away. He himself loves Mecca with tender love. He will not leave Mecca. It is his birth-place and here, in Mecca, has come to him the revelation of the Koran. But his poor

followers must seek protection somewhere.

Mecca ridicules the Prophet. Mecca calls him mad. Mecca is anxious to collect wealth. Mecca does not believe in Mahomed's mission. But near Mecca is another place, Exum. Here, a Christian ruler holds his court. He is wise and just and mighty. He is the Emperor of Abyssinia. They call him the Negus. They say he is descended from Solomon, the wise. The Negus is not afraid of the Koreish tribe. The Negus would fain carry the Christian faith into Mecca : and there is not a little that is common between the Christian faith and Islam.

Mahomed asks some of his persecuted followers to seek protection in the kingdom of the Negus. So, in the fifth year of Mahomed's mission, fifteen of his followers, two men and four women, migrate to Abyssinia. The tolerant Christian king receives them cordially. He is friendly to the fugitives. He asks them to speak of their faith. And the leader of the fugitives, Jafar, in a few words, pays a rich tribute to Mahomed.

Jafar says to the Negus :—"Sire, we were plunged deep in sins, and we were immersed in ignorance. We worshipped the idols : we burned our daughters alive : we drank : we gambled. God, in His mercy, sent us a Prophet. He taught us to believe in the One Allah and to pray to Him alone. This Prophet, Mahomed, in the mercy of God, proved to be our saviour. To him God revealed a Book."

"And what is the Book revealed to your Prophet?" asks the Negus.

And Jafar recites the "surah" wherein is told

the story of the birth of John the Baptist, and of Jesus down to the account of Mary being fed with miraculous food.

"Surely," says the Negus with tears in his eyes, "this is like the Bible. The same spirit works in both!"

"And what does your Prophet teach you?" asks the Negus.

And Jafar says :—"He teaches thus :—Do not worship the stones! Do not tell lies! Do not shed the blood of your brethren! Turn away from evil! Renounce vice and deceit! Look after the orphans! Respect your neighbours! Be kind to women! Give alms to the needy! Do good deeds! Offer your prayers to God, and do His Will!"

"And what," asks the Negus, "do you think of Isa (Jesus)?"

And Jafar says :—"Sire! Isa, too, we honour. For Isa is in truth and in spirit the servant of God and His apostle."

And the king says :—"Even so do we believe. Blessed be you and blessed is your Prophet!"

The Negus lets the Muslims stay in his land, unharmed.

The news of the reception accorded to them by the mighty Emperor of Abyssinia travels swiftly from town to town and village to village. Dark become the faces of the Koreishi tribe. "This Mahomed," they say, "is a dangerous man. Who knew he would find an ally in the Negus? Let us lay our heads together to consider what to do."

The Koreishites now fear Mahomed, and their hate for him has grown as their fear, for he has

allied himself with the Negus,—a Christian and a foreigner. Are not Mahomed and the Negus a danger to Mecca? The Koreishites now resolve to send a deputation to the Negus to induce him to withdraw his support from the followers of the Prophet.

The deputation is led by the Arabian poet, Amr. He is cunning and is clever at his trade. He has repeatedly ridiculed the Prophet in stinging verses. He takes with himself gold and silver and other costly presents and spreads them before the Negus.

“O ruler of men!” says Amr, “these be the Koreishi gifts to you. Sire, graciously accept them!”

The Negus asks Amr to explain the object of his visit.

Amr says :—“O ruler of men, I come in behalf of the Koreishi tribe to ask you, sire, to deliver unto us the men of Mecca. You, sire, have given them shelter, when we are anxious to deal with them. For they have betrayed Mecca and followed the dreamer Mahomed, who calls himself a prophet and messenger of God. And they ridicule your faith as they ridicule ours!”

The Negus says :—“This I can say, they do not ridicule my faith : for they have reverence for Isa and they call him a Messenger of God.”

The Negus, then, picks up a small piece of wood from the floor and, looking intently at Amr and others in deputation, says :—“How small this piece of wood! So small is the difference between my faith and the faith of these people who are peace-loving and poor. I will not have your silver and gold. Not for a mountain of gold will

I desert these people. They have done me no harm, and they have not harmed you. Their faith is worship of one God and reverence for all prophets. If these simple, uneducated sons and daughters of the Desert : choose to stay in my kingdom, how can I betray them to you?"

And Amr with others leaves the country of the Negus. Crest-fallen, they tell the Koreishites of the answer and attitude of the Negus. The Koreishites are terror-struck : for the Negus is a mighty ruler. And Mahomed continues to preach at the Kaaba and recite verses from the Koran.

HATRED CEASETH NOT BY HATRED

Abu Hakim, the rich leader of the Koreishites, hates Mahomed as intensely as he is devoted to his community sincerely. Abu Hakim is ready to give his own life to the gods if his community could, thus, get rid of Mahomed. Abu Hakim has a plan. He must continue to insult and persecute the Prophet, until he would lose his temper and kill him! Such a death is the crown of glory Abu Hakim covets.

Again and again, the two meet each other in a street. And, again and again, does Abu Hakim pull Mahomed by the beard and insult him. Abu Hakim meets Mahomed at the Kaaba and, when Mahomed kneels down in prayer, Abu Hakim turns up and throws dirt on the devoted head of the Prophet. And what does Mahomed do in

return? He gets up from his prayers, then quietly looks at Abu Hakim and says :—"Forgiveness is better than vengeance." And, on returning to his house, Mahomed tells his daughter :—"Don't worry : wash my clothes!"

Mahomed is not weak. Mahomed is a man of supreme courage. But he knows that strength forgives and forgiveness is nobler than retaliation. Mahomed enters, more and more, into the depths of his soul. Those in the depths pray. Mahomed prays, then leaps forward to new victories.

THE SPIRIT OF TRUE RELIGION

Advaita, even as a boy, is observant and devout. He grows in years. He becomes a scholar. He develops reverence for God and for the Saints of God. He finds that Bengal is dominated by Shakta Dharma. He finds, also, that in the name of this dharma, *himsā* (violence) is committed and is glorified as righteousness. He feels unhappy, for thousands of goats are sacrificed on the altar of the goddess,—Kali Devi.

One day, a big *utsav* (function) is being held in honour of the Devi. Advaita is young and he, too, joins the *utsav*. He finds that the goats are being slaughtered. Advaita enters the *pañḍāl*, where devout worshippers have come together to worship Kali. The Raja himself is there. Advaita enters in and, without doing *pranāms* to Kali, quietly sits down in the camp.

The Raja says to him :—"Alas, you sit down
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without doing reverence to Kali!"

Advaita, even at this age, is a worshipper of Truth. And he has a reflective, critical mind. He answers the Raja thus :—"The Devi is the World-Mother. Surely, no mother eats her own children! This worship, O king, in which so many of God's creatures are killed, is really a worship of *vasanās* (desires). I bow to the Supreme. In bowing to Him, do I not bow to all who are worthy of homage and reverence? But this place where *himsā* (violence) is done to creatures of the Lord can hardly be called a Temple. Nor can this sacrifice be called a worship!"

Advaita grows in knowledge, reverence and *ahimsā* (compassion). He speaks to as many as he can of the "welfare of creatures." He grows in *vairāgya*,—the spirit of detachment. He goes on a pilgrimage, visiting shrines at Rameshwaram, Madura and other holy places. He arrives, at last, at the *ashrama* of Madhavacharya. Here dwells a holy man, Madhavendrapuri. He sees Advaita and feels very happy. Madhavendrapuri embraces Advaita, calls him "blessed among the sons of men," and gives him "*Krishna mantra*."

Advaita is now filled with a new *shakti*, a new inspiration, a new dynamic power. To Madhavendrapuri, his Guru, Advaita pours out his heart, saying :—"Master, how long? How long will these creatures of God be killed in the name of *dharma* (religion) and worship?"

Then speaks the Guru unto his disciple, Advaita :—"My child, be not bewildered! The Lord will check this growing evil. And the Lord will soon appear in a special manifestation, and the Lord

will save His creatures and deliver His *bhakta* (devotees) from the great sorrow!"

THE SONG OF SHANTIDEVA

Shantideva was a mystic and a sage. He was the son of a king of Gujerat, called in those days Saurashtra ("The Good Kingdom"). India's most prominent king, then, was Sila, the son of Harsha,—the great emperor of India, who once every five years gave away his all,—jewels and diamonds, silver and gold, robes and vessels,—to the poor and needy.

Sila was a worthy son of a worthy father. Sila's son was Shantideva. He inherited the kingdom and spiritual aspirations of his father and his grandfather.

Shantideva was a psychic, too. On the day he was about to receive the royal consecration, he saw, as in a dream, the Boddhisatva Manjusri. And the Boddhisatva's voice spoke to him, saying :—"Shantideva! renounce the glory of kingship and be a servant of the poor and lowly."

Shantideva obeyed the voice of the Unseen. Shantideva refused to be crowned. He renounced the palace and put on the humble garb of a *bhikkhu* (mendicant). Shantideva opened out his heart in a hymn of wondrous beauty :—

May I be for all beings
A healer of pain!

May I be to all who ail

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A doctor and a nurse!

May I give food and drink to all
Who suffer from pangs of hunger and thirst!

May I be to the poor
A treasure untold!

May I be a defender of those
That forsaken lie on the roadside!

May I be to those who long for the Other Shore
A boat and a bridge!

May I be a lamp that holds the light
To those who lose the way!

To this vision has India borne witness through
the ages. This vision is India. This vision will
build and bind India and will rebuild civilisation.

SAUL BECOMES PAUL

Omar is a young man. He is poor but he has the strength of ten. He is a traveller. He takes his caravans to different places. He is adventurous and he resorts to tricks to make money. When he reaches the Customs House, he is keen on evading paying duties to the Customs officials. He gives his gold and pearls to his camels to swallow. So he makes money, until the Customs officials come to know of his tricks. His money melts : he remains poor.

He is a Koreishite and is conscious of his talents and energy. He is eager to rise to prominence

and amass riches. He knows that the Koreishites are out to persecute Mahomed. He feels that the best way to rise to influence and affluence is to persecute the Prophet. He seldom misses a chance to insult Mahomed, but he must do something more. He now plans to murder Mahomed.

One day, Omar, with a drawn sword, sets out for the house of Mahomed. Omar meets an old Arab on the way.

"Your sword is drawn, Omar! Are you out to murder someone?" asks the old Arab.

"Yes," says Omar; "I am out to murder Mahomed!"

"But you must first see," says the Arab, "that your own house is not tainted. Do you know there is a Muslim in your house?"

"Who?" asks Omar.

"Your own sister! She has gone over to Islam."

"I never knew," says Omar in indignation; "let me go to slay her first!"

Wild with rage, Omar runs to his sister's house. He finds she is reading rhythmically the Koran, and in her eyes are tears. Omar slaps her in the face, then prepares to kill her.

"Slay me, brother," she says, "but, first, listen to the Koran. Let me read it, and you will know what this Book is about. Then strike the sword at me,—if you will! But first, hear!"

The rhythmical beauty of the *suras* and the lyrical voice of the girl impress Omar deeply. She continues to read: he continues to hear, and his wonder grows. "What verses!" says Omar; "here are gems of the purest radiance!"

"Is this Islam?" he asks his sister.

And she says :—"This is Islam, and this Koran is the revelation of God to man!"

"May I read it?" Omar asks.

"By all means," says his sister, "but you must first purify yourself. For none save the pure may look upon the Koran!"

Omar opens the book and reads the words :—"All things in heaven and on earth praise God, and He is Omnipotent and Omniscient." Omar reads on until he comes to the passage :—"They believe in God and his Apostle."

"I, too, believe!" says Omar, involuntarily.

And with tears in his eyes, Omar hastens to the house of Mahomed. "Fear not," he says to those who dwell in the house; "I come to be converted to Islam. Mahomed is the Prophet of Allah, and to him I dedicate my life!"

Omar becomes a Muslim, then runs to the house of the Hashimite leader and says :—"I, too, am a Muslim!"

What a beautiful life he lives! Omer, who was out to persecute the Prophet, becomes a devoted follower of Islam. Saul has become Paul. Omar devotes his time and talents to the consolidation and spread of Islam. Omar becomes the second Khalifa. Omar takes the flag of Islam to Egypt and Iran. Omar builds the mosque of Jerusalem. Omar organises the kingdom of Mahomed. And, like the Prophet, Omar is simple and humble and has profound love for the poor. Omar is a ruler, but he lives in a tent. Soft cushions are not for him, and in his hand he carries a big stick. Omar is a simple, strong hero of Islam.

A CHILD-SAINT

Sri Ramakrishna was as a child, moving in the midst of men with the tender grace and beauty of a child of God. As a child he cried to God as the Mother :—"Mā! Mā!"

When two women of ill-fame came to tempt him, he saw them, then cried, "Mother," and dropped down unconscious! When some beautiful girls came, filled with the conceit of their beauty and their power which they thought the saint would not be able to resist, he went into *samadhi*, crying, "Mā!" "Mother!" And ever the Mother, the Divine Mother, guarded him.

When he came to normal consciousness, the girls realised what a sin they had committed in coming to a saint with an evil intent. They repented. They fell down at his feet and asked to be forgiven. They became his disciples!

MAD FOR THE LORD

In a dark hour of India's history, Nanak appeared. Not many in his day realised the significance of the Guru's coming. Not many understood that he was to give a message mightier than the princes of the earth. Many, indeed, thought him to be a mad-cap! In one of his hymns the Guru calls himself, in a deep spiritual sense, "simpleton Nanak who has become mad for the Lord." Such "mad" men are the true supermen of history. And they are misunderstood.

Nanak's mother ~~became anxious.~~ She told him
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once that many regarded him as mad. She asked him to go abroad and give up his devotions for some time so that the people might know that he was no longer mad! And Nanak answered :—

To repeat the Name is to live :

To forget is to die.

Then how can I forget it,

My Mother ?

They who forget their Spouse are faithless:

Without His name they are naught!

Guru Nanak's parents gave him money : he spent it in the service of others. He met a *sadhu* and gave away his brass jug and gold finger-ring to him. His father was annoyed. "Give up these ways," he said to Nanak, "and walk after the manner of other people." He did not know that his boy, Nanak, was a "servant of the Beloved One."

Asked by his father to attend to his lands, he said he was already a "God's farmer." Asked to keep a shop, he said that to take home "profits" one must be a "dealer" of the true Name. Is it a wonder that many thought him a madman? Such "mad" men have made history.

THE WOMAN DIVINE

Sita is unparalleled in all history. Helen of ancient Greece had singular beauty. But in Sita, beauty was blended with purity and spirituality. Helen was the woman natural, Sita the woman

divine : and divinity shines in *tapasya*.

Soon after she married Rama, Dasaratha asked his son to go into exile for fourteen years. Rama said he must not take Sita with him to the forest, for the forest was a world of fear, full of bears and tigers and wolves and lions and wild elephants, demons and serpents : and Sita would get no food in the forest, except sour fruits and roots, and she must in the forest sleep on stony ground. Then to Rama, Sita said with tears in her eyes that to be with him was to be in a palace, that a long journey with him would be a joy, that sour fruits would be sweet as the food of the gods, and that if he left her, her heart would break.

How much she suffered in the forest and, later, in Lanka, when forcibly removed by Ravana! And after Rama's victory over Ravana, she was called upon to go through the fire. Sita's was a path not of roses but of flames. Sita was the very picture of *tapasya*. Therefore history remembers her and salutes her as an immortal.

Money and power pass away. What lives and is cherished as sacred in the memory of the universe is sacrifice. It is the eternal in time. Sita stands for all time a symbol of sacrifice.

THE GURU'S ANSWERS

Tired and spent in strength, Guru Nanak enters, one day, the Muslim mosque at Mecca; and there he is found sleeping with his feet turned to the Kaaba. The keeper of the mosque,—the Imam,—
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kicks him and says :—"What have you done? You are sleeping with your feet turned to the Kaaba? Is not this the place of God?"

What answer does the Guru give? "Be not angry, I request. Tell me, where shall I turn my feet where the House of God is not?"

So, at Banaras, he enters into a discussion with Pandit Chattar Das, saying to him :—"Wash your mind rather than the stone images."

When, as a boy, he is asked to go through the thread-ceremony, he, in a number of verses, asks the priest to remember that there is another thread which the soul may put on,—the thread of love,—whereof the cotton is compassion, and the knots are abstinence and truth. Such a thread, he says, is not snapped, nor soiled, nor burnt, nor lost.

HASAN'S FAITH

Hasan was poisoned. When asked by his brother, Hussein, to give the name of the man suspected of poisoning him, he answered with singular generosity :—"This world is as a long night. Leave the man alone. He and I shall meet, one day, in open daylight, in the presence of the Most High."

PERIOD OF PREPARATION

Parasi realises that to grow in the life beauti-

ful, he must discipline his desires. Passion maketh a man ugly, deformed. Purity is the secret of beauty and radiance.

One day, a strange, mystic impulse stirs him. He leaves his cottage. His Home is elsewhere. He goes to a forest. He stays there for some years. They are years of ripening of his soul. He learns to meditate. He teaches himself self-control, and he makes the supreme discovery that the world and its pleasures pass, but the Eternal abides.

Again and again, you may find him speaking to himself, telling his body :—"I will not let you have what you clamour for." The body clamours for comfort : the body would fain keep away from work and toil : the body would like to be lazy or indulge in luxury. So this great *bhakta* teaches his body to be moderate in eating and sleep. Eating much and sleeping much are sins against the spiritual law of moderation. A few morsels of food are enough for him.

One day, he is tempted to eat one more morsel. He repents : he sheds tears. He tells his body :—"Break not the divine rule of moderation, if thou wilt grow in health and radiance!" And he teaches his body, also, to be simple in dress. For some days he wears leaves of trees,—and feels happy.

WHOM GOD CHOOSES, HE ANNIHILATES!

Father La Combe was a healer. One who lay on sick-bed, says of him :—"As soon as he entered the house, without my knowing it, my pains were

alleviated. And when he came into my room and blessed me, with his hands on my head, I was perfectly cured. The doctors were so surprised they did not know how to account for my cure!" We can understand it : the servants of God have healing vibrations.

One suffered from a violent cough. The Father said :—"Let your cough cease!" And the report has it that the cough "at once stopped!" Was it a case of faith-healing?

Many such instances are recorded of Indian saints. Are not saints the great healers of humanity?

There are stories, too, of greater miracles of mercy the Father performed. One day, he was in a boat with some passengers. A furious gale stirred the lake : and the boat was to capsize. The Father made the sign of the Cross over the waves, and the boatman saw the billows beat retreat : the boat was saved !

Father La Combe inspired wondrous devotion among women and girls : they are responsive to psychic and spiritual forces. History shows that whenever a man appears who becomes a centre of higher psychic forces, dark forces, too, arise against him. So it happened in the case of Father La Combe. Rumours became rife. The purity of his character was impeached. The loving devotion of women to this servant of God was suspected. There were ecclesiastics who went, from place to place, to speak against him with violence and to spread scandals against the saint.

Why does God permit the scandals against his dear ones to spread? He wants them to attain

to the summit of perfection. The summit is "annihilation." In Sufi literature it is named *fannā* : it is the *nirvāna*, the *pari-nirvāna* of the *arhat*, the "chosen-one."

Whom God chooses, He annihilates! Father La Combe, a servant and follower of Jesus, a saint who worked miracles of healing, who went about bringing comfort to broken homes and broken hearts, and whose presence radiated peace and love, became a target of the conspiracy against him of dark forces!

His own Church was arrayed against him. He was seized and imprisoned in the Bastille. Was not Jesus seized and sent up the Cross? Father La Combe was arrested without warrant. No charge could be proved against him : he was pure, he was peerless, he was radiant with love. But they tried him in secret. They held him captive. The saint of God, persecuted by both the Church and the State, died,—in isolation. Father, forgive them, for they knew not what they did. Father La Combe followed "in His steps" and died,—a martyr to his Master!

THE BIRTH OF THE RAMAYANA

Valmiki hath renounced. He hath meditated. He has gone into silence. Far from the madding crowds of men, he lives in a forest. One day, he goes to the river Tamasa to bathe. Behind him is a jungle-man who, with arrow in hand, shoots a heron playing beside the water of the

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river Tamasa. The little bird falls dead at the feet of Valmiki. His heart is filled with grief : how cruel the hunter who has killed the little bird !

And in deep sorrow of the heart, Valmiki curses the hunter. The curse spontaneously becomes a verse in the *annushtubh* metre. The curse is a cry of sorrow (*shoka*) : and out of the *shoka* of the heart springs a *sloka* (verse). Valmiki's heart becomes receptive of influences and emanations of nature. And the same night, an angel of the Lord appears to Valmiki in a vision, saying :—"Sing the story of Rama."

This story the sage sings in *slokas* in the *annushtubh* metre, and the *Ramāyana* is born. "Ramāyana" means, "Rama's *āyana*," "Rama's wanderings." Valmiki's heart, full of sympathy and love, sings the story of Rama. And the story has moved India's multitudes to tears.

THE MYSTIC AND THE MONARCH

Abu Hasan was a contemporary of Mahomad Ghazni,—a man of iron and blood. He loved to be known as the "destroyer," the "breaker" of temples and idols. The temple-priests of India offered him millions of money to spare the far-famed temple of Somnath. But Mahomed Ghazni was a man of the Tartar-Bolshevist type : he believed in blood and violence. And under his order the temple-priests were ruthlessly slaughtered, and Somnath, with its hoarded wealth, fell to the invasion of this man of terror. He

belonged to the tremendous type of "destroyers" like Attila and Chengiz Khan.

He returns from India changed. The memory of his cruel deeds haunts him : he repents. One day, he wishes to see Abu Hasan. Hasan is known as a *dervish* of God, a *fakir*, who loves the desert and the wilderness. And in the East, even kings must bow down to a *dervish* of the desert. Akbar was the Emperor of India, but he went in humble guise to the broken cottages of *fakirs* and saints. Mahomed Ghazni comes, in curiosity, to meet Abu Hasan. And first a messenger meets Abu Hasan and says :—"Servant of God! the great king cometh to meet you. It is but meet that you come out of your house to greet the mighty king!"

Abu Hasan says to the messenger :—"Brother! forgive me. Go and tell the king that Hasan is all-absorbed in greeting the King of kings, and has no time to greet anyone else!"

Mahomed Ghazni is amazed at this answer. His vanity is wounded. But he exercises self-control and says to himself :—"Let me go to this man and test him!"

So the king puts off his royal robe and gives it to a companion, Ayaz, to wear it. The king puts on the simple dress of a *sipāhi* and accompanies Ayaz, until they reach the cottage of Hasan. At the door, the king, now dressed as a *sipāhi*, gives a salute to the *dervish*, who is sitting in his room. The *dervish*, seated on the ground, returns the salute : he does not go out and greet the king.

The *sipāhi* says to Abu Hasan :—"O *dervish* of God! your king is at the door. It is time that
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you rise to greet him."

Abu Hasan says :—"These be but forms and ceremonies. A *dervish* rises above them to commune with the Face of the Beloved. Send your servants afar, then come to me!"

The king now knows that Abu Hasan knows and sends afar his servants and enters the cottage and sits at Hasan's feet.

The king says :—"O *dervish*, do explain to me what Bayazid means."

Abu Hasan :—"Bayazid, the *dervish*?"

King :—"Yes. He saith what I do not understand."

Abu Hasan :—"He saith :—Whoever seeth a God-man is blessed : he hath conquered all ills."

King :—"How can this be? The Holy Prophet had two uncles. They were evil-minded and they saw the Holy Prophet, but their ills were beyond measure : and they were in the depths of misery."

Abu Hasan :—"O king, you speak as one who knoweth not. 'Only a few of his followers did see the Holy Prophet!' Thus is it written in the Holy Writ. And you forget that Allah looketh at you but you *see* Him not. God's *nazar* is upon you, but you do not have His *darshan*. And a God-man may *look* at you, but you may not really *see* him. Only to a few is granted a vision of a God-man as he really is in God!"

The king is struck with this answer and now, with folded hands, says :—"O *dervish* of God, teach me, for I know nothing!"

Abu Hasan says :—"O king, keep away from injustice. And, with a heart contrite and lowly,

worship Allah every day, and look upon your people with an eye of compassion!"

The king's eyes are touched with tears. And bowing down in reverence, the king says :—
"Bless me, O *dervish* of God!"

And Abu Hasan says :—"O my God, Thou art the Lord of Compassion! Forgive Thou the men that walk the way that leadeth unto Thee!"

"And why?" asks the king.

"Lest they be tempted to fall in the trap of pride and think that they are a class apart from others!"

The king says :—"A second blessing, too, give thou me, O *dervish* of God!"

And Abu Hasan says :—"So act everyday that your works and their fruits are praised in the Court of the Angels."

"And why?" asks the king.

"For the praise of men is flattery and is born of self-esteem or ignorance : but the angels know and when they praise, they do it with a clean heart and a seeing mind!"

The king, filled with joy, places at Abu Hasan's feet a gift of a thousand gold *mohurs* (sovereigns). And Abu Hasan lays his hand upon a bread and breaks it into fragments : and one fragment of it he gives to the king, saying, "Eat it!" The king begins to chew it, but he cannot gulp it down his throat. And Abu Hasan says to him :—"O king, you are unable to swallow this fragment of bread. You find it too bitter for you. Is it not so? This bread does not go down your throat. Then tell me, O king, how can I swallow these bitter *mohurs* of gold? Take these back, O king!"

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The king presses Abu Hasan, again and again, to accept the *mohurs* : not one does Abu Hasan touch.

The king rises to go, filled with unspeakable joy.

"And now," says the king, "I go. I go with gratitude in my heart for your teaching and your blessing. But one longing remains!"

"What is it? Speak without reserve!" says Abu Hasan.

The king says :—"I wish to take from you something as a token of my visit to a saint and a servant of God."

Abu Hasan takes a fragment of a cloth worn by him, and hands it over to the king. The king's joy knows no bounds. And as the king is about to go, Hasan rises up and bids farewell.

Then asks the king :—"O *dervish* of God, when I came to you, you treated me with supreme carelessness. Now as I go, you rise up and show respect to me. What is the meaning of it all?"

Abu Hasan says :—"When you came to me, you came in the pride of a king, you came to examine me. Now you go in humility and purity and with the mercy of God in your heart. And over you shines this fragment of a *fakir's* garment, radiant with the golden light of God! I have risen up to bow down not to a king but to this golden light of the King of kings!"

"I SEEK ALLAH ALONE!"

Yusuf was so beautiful. Travelling in Arabia,

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he had occasion to call on a wealthy merchant. In his house was staying, as a guest, the daughter of an Amir (a rich ruler). She saw Yusuf, and she was thrilled with his beauty. And losing self-control, she opened out her heart to him and said :—"Yusuf, be mine! I am thine!"

In Yusuf's heart was a longing for the Eternal. Yusuf's whole soul desired to be freed from *sansāra* (the bondage of the world), to simplify his life and concentrate it on Eternal Beauty. Yusuf longed to escape the manifold,—aye, to forsake it for the sake of the One Beloeved. Yusuf sought his rest in the holy place of his heart, not in marriage with a rich ruler's daughter. So, as he heard the words of the girl, he trembled from head to foot, and he said to himself :—"Escape! Escape!" Within him was the resolve to escape the illusion of woman and wealth.

Yusuf was well-versed in books. Like Abelard of France, he could stir multitudes with his eloquence. But I love him not for his learning, but because the idea filled him that life was richer than learning. He longed for a life of purity : he was convinced that the pure in heart would see the Divine Beauty. As he thought of the words of the daughter of the rich ruler, he grew afraid of her. "I have not," he said to himself, "the riches of the world. She may speak to her father and make my position difficult. I had better leave Arabia altogether. I seek Allah alone!"

Yusuf left Arabia for Egypt.

SEE WHERE YOUR FOOD COMES FROM!

Genius is not hereditary. Ahmed had a son who inherited none of the great qualities of his saintly father. Ahmed was humble,—and original : his son was corrupt,—a child of luxury and decadence. Ahmed was intuitive, like Wagner's "Parsifal," a "pure fool," a "fool in Allah." Such "fools" redeem the world. Ahmed's son was argumentative, crudely controversial, egoistic.

One day, a well-known devotee of Ahmed comes to see him. Ahmed's son is in his revelry and song. He sees the devotee but has not the courtesy to speak a single word of welcome to him. The devotee meets Ahmed with love and reverence.

And Ahmed says :—"Did my son meet you?"

The devotee says :—"Master! He saw me, and I saw him."

Ahmed understands, then smiles and says :—"One night, a neighbour sent us sweets. My wife and I ate them. Then we learnt that the sweets came from the palace of the king. That night this boy entered into his mother's womb. There was *rajo-guna* in the king's sweets we ate. In *rajo-guna* was the boy born : and he has been a *rajo-guni* since his birth. May Allah forgive us!"

LOOK ON ALL WITH THE SAME EYE!

Mahomed helps the widow and the orphan. When he hears of the troubles of a widow who is too old to work and too poor to get food, he tells Khadija,—the rich woman in whose service he is,—

not to eat until she has provided for the poor, old widow. When he sees a blind woman tumble in a street in Mecca, he leads her gently to her house and carries meals to her house, every day. Seeing a woman with a heavy load on her head, he carries on his own head her load to her house. When he sees a man beating his wife, Mahomed tells him :—"O, do not beat a woman nor degrade her!"

How he loves Khadija's slave, Zaid! Him Mahomed treats as his own son. Mahomed sees another slave crying when grinding wheat. The slave is ill. Mahomed sits down before him and grinds for him the wheat. Yet another slave is ill and there is none to look after him. Mahomed sits by the bed of the slave all night.

Mahomed finds that a girl is being beaten by a man : the girl is a slave. She weeps, she cries for help. Mahomed asks him to treat the girl gently. The man does not listen to Mahomed. He induces Khadija to give money to rescue the girl : and she is freed from the yoke of her cruel master.

Mahomed sees an old gardener : he cannot carry water from the far-off stream for the garden. Mahomed does the job and waters the garden and gives blessings to the gardener.

Mahomed sees a child lifting a heavy load : Mahomed pats the child affectionately and carries on his shoulder the child's load and walks on till the destination is reached and the load delivered.

A slave is ill. Mahomed goes to serve him. "Has my master," says the slave, "sent you to
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look after me?"

"Yes," says Mahomed, "the Master of masters has sent me to serve you!"

Mahomed sees a Jew insulting an Arab who has borrowed some money of the Jew. Mahomed's eyes are touched with tears. He quickly brings money from his house and pays the Arab's debt.

Mahomed feels sad when he sees men shooting little birds. "It hurts me," he says, "to see men killing birds!"

One day, as Mahomed stands in the Kaaba, he is conversing with a man of Mecca. The man belongs to a good family, and has money. If he,—Mahomed thinks,—can be won over to Islam, the cause would gain so much. Mahomed is absorbed in a talk to this man regarding the faith of Islam.

Suddenly, a blind old Bedouin (from the desert), Abdullah by name, turns up. He has heard of Mahomed and comes to know of the way of salvation. He draws near Mahomed and puts him a question. Mahomed feels disturbed. He has been talking to the wealthy man from Mecca. And turning impatiently to the blind, old man, Mahomed says :—"Disturb me not. I am occupied with important business." The blind, old man is disappointed.

Mahomed has a vision the same night. In the vision he sees that the Archangel, Gabriel, is come to him,—to rebuke him for his conduct. Mahomed feels repentent and records against himself the following sharp rebuke still enshrined in the Koran :—

"The Prophet frowned and turned his back, for that there came to him a blind man!

“But what would make thee know whether happily he may be purified? Or may be mindful and the reminder profit him?”

“But as for him who is wealthy, thou dost attend to him and thou dost not care that he is purified. But as for him who cometh to thee earnestly fearing the while, from him thou turnest away!”

The next morning, he goes out in search of the blind, old beggar and finds him and cries bitterly and asks for pardon. Then Mahomed makes the following significant confession :—“I am a man like the others : nor am I free of sin.”

Mahomed honours the blind, old man and, in the days of his power, makes Abdullah twice the governor of Medina. Mahomed has not a short memory. He remembers Abdullah as one “on whose account my Lord reproved me!”

LIFE TEACHES BETTER THAN LIPS

One day, a member of his school comes to Parasi and says :—“Master! I have a longing to feed you. Won’t you come to my house? It will be blessed by your presence.”

The next day, Parasi goes there. He is a Muslim, but he eats no flesh. Yet he does not compel members of his school to give up eating flesh. He believes that life teaches better than lips. A servant of God must impose nothing on others : he but bears witness to the truth and beauty of higher life.

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Parasi sits down to meals. He hardly puts the first morsel in his mouth, when he finds that it is a piece of flesh. He immediately takes it out and exclaims :—"Blessed be the Lord!"

He washes his mouth. He quietly gets up and says to his host :—"Brother, you have been kind. You have prepared for me food in love. I accept it. You did not know, brother, that I take no flesh. But you have given me love in abundance. Blessed be the Lord!"

Then he talks to his host of spiritual life and the way to grow. The host has no food to offer to Parasi. But his talk hath lent new beauty to the meeting. His talk hath opened to the host a treasure of man's divine heritage. He is a new man! And Parasi returns home, repeating the *mantra* :—"Blessed be the Lord!"

This one truth he teaches, again and again, and he teaches it with power because he lives it in deeds of daily life. "Let not your hearts be troubled!" he says. "But in all stations of life, say :—"Blessed be the Lord!" And if your bodies be sick or in pain, say :—"Blessed be the Lord!" For, nothing happens without the Will of Allah! Not a leaf stirs, not a hand moves, not an eye winks, not a tongue tells, not an ear hears without the Will of Allah."

THE TEMPTATION OF A FAKIR

Junnuna prays intensely :—"O Lord, make me Thine! Let not the world overwhelm me! But

fill me with Thy Presence that I may see Thy Beauty everywhere!"

One day, he goes to a river to have his bath and offer his prayers to God. Junnuna enters into the river, when lo and behold! his eyes are turned to the roof of a radiant house. One is standing on the roof, and Junnuna's eyes are there, transfixed. He is absorbed in a form of wondrous beauty. A young woman is standing on the roof and Junnuna looks on : Junnuna has lost himself in this vision of loveliness. And, waking from this vision, he says to her :—"O beautiful one, are you married? And what is your name?"

And she answers :—"Junnuna, you are no stranger to me. Your name has travelled to me, and I was told that you were a *fakir*, a man of realisation, wisdom-filled, God-intoxicated. When I saw you at a distance, I was filled with a longing to see you and be blessed. Now I see you near, and now I know, alas! that earthly beauty bereaves you of reason and self-control!"

Longing to hear her more,—for to him her words were sweeter than honey,—he says :—"Speak to me more clearly, for my mind is confused. And true it is, I feel, at this moment, like a drunken man!"

And she, in whose heart is love of God and love of the saints of God, speaketh,—her eyes radiant with compassion and humility :—"Junnuna, if you were a *fakir*, you would not be distracted by a form. If you were a man of realisation, you would know that what endureth not is for ever and ever only a dream. If you were wisdom-filled, your heart would rise above desire and be

lifted to the beatific vision of eternal Truth. If you were God-intoxicated, your joy would be in Him, not in a frail, fickle creature of dust and desire,—in Him, and His Light which is brighter than sun and moon and stars!”

So saying, she vanishes. Junnuna turns this way and that. Tears tremble in his eyes and, for some moments, he meditates upon her words and says to himself :—“What she hath said of me is true. Every word of that radiant one had a ring of sincerity. It is true I am not yet become a true *fakir* : wisdom is still afar! For I see that in my heart is a flame, not a spring of the holy waters that heal. And in mine eyes is still earthly desire, not the intoxication of the Eternal Name. What right have I to live?”

JUNNUNA AND THE HOLY MAN

One day, as Junnuna goes up a mountain, he sees a number of men and women. They all are sick and afflicted and have congregated in one place.

Junnuna asks :—“Why are so many come together in this place on mountain-heights? And they all are sick and afflicted!”

One of them says :—“In yon cottage dwells a *tapasvi*, a holy man. Once a year, he cometh out of his cottage and, with his healing breath, heals the sick, and then enters again the cottage. Today is the annual day of his *darshana* : so the crowds are come together here to see him and be healed!”

After some time, the holy man cometh out of his cottage. His body is so frail,—bones without flesh and blood. Pallor is on his lips, his eyes are sunk in their sockets, but his face is radiant with a strange, unearthly light. As he comes out, he gazes with compassionate eyes on the men and women who are come to see him and be cured. Then he lifts his eyes in supplication to the Heavens above. He calls each patient to himself, and into each he breathes the breath of his benediction. He heals them all, then goes back to his cottage. As he goes, Junnuna clings to his feet and says :—"O holy one, thou hast cured so many. Look thou on me, too, with eyes of compassion. For I, too, suffer. In the name of Allah, I ask thee to heal me!"

The holy man hears him and says :—"Junnuna, leave me! I am nothing. On the High Throne sitteth He who seeth all,—my Beloved, your Friend! Go to Him. Take shelter at His Feet. He will heal thee!"

And the holy man re-enters his cottage. And Junnuna learns to enter into the cave of his heart. There he seeks the Lord, until He finds him. For ever the Lord seeketh His own. He finds us first : then are we God-possessed, absorbed in the Eternal.

THE MAN WHOSE FIVE FRIENDS WERE DEAD

One evening, when his talk to the class is over, a man comes and sits at Parasi's feet.

"Whence are you?" Parasi ask him.

And the man says :—"Sir, I come from a far-off place. Your name has travelled, far and wide. I heard of you and your holy teaching : and I am come to have your blessings."

Parasi says to him :—"Brother, speak what you will! Speak without reserve."

The man says :—"Sir, I come from a great distance. I arrived here this morn. I am a stranger here. I need food. I have no friend, no relative here. If you will kindly let me stay in your school and give me daily food, I shall feel grateful."

Parasi says :—"Brother, I gladly give you leave to stay here."

A few days pass. Parasi calls the man to his room and says :—"Brother, you come every day, but why do you wear black clothes?"

The man says :—"Master, if a relative or friend dies, we wear black. It is the custom of our country."

Parasi asks :—"Which of your friends or relatives have you lost?"

The man says :—"Master, five friends! Long did they stay with me : all the five died!"

Parasi says :—"Five friends: so many! And they all died the same day. May I know their names?"

The man says :—"Master, I dare not say 'no'

to you. You ask : and I must tell you. The names of my five friends are,—passion, anger, greed, attachment and egoism. All the five died the same day. All the five were my friends and had stayed with me long. Therefore, I wear black!”

Parasi calls a servant and says to him :—“Turn this man out of the door!”

The man is confounded, and says :—“Master, have mercy! Do not turn me out of the door. I have not had my noon-meals yet.”

But Parasi is adamant. He says to the servant :—“Turn him out of the door!”

The man says :—“I go out of the Hall, but I will cling to the outskirts of this holy house. And I shall hope that some day the Master will look upon me with mercy. I know not, but I must have done some wrong!”

And the man sits outside, but his eyes are bright with a strange, mystic light.

At 12 o'clock noon, Parasi tells the servant :—“Call the man in!” The man is brought before Parasi, who says :—“It is noon : it is the hour when resident members of the school sit to meals. You are hungry. Have your meals!”

The man feels happy. But as soon as he has finished his meals, Parasi calls his servant again and says :—“Turn this man out!”

So is this man turned out seventeen times! And, every time, Parasi looks into his face : and, every time, he finds that the man's eyes sparkle with a strange, mystic light. Every time, the man is seen smiling : his face is calm, quiet.

Parasi calls the man again and says :—“Blessed are you among the mortals! I was trying to test

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you. I never meant to insult you. But it looked like my insulting you. And I did so seventeen times. And every time I saw you smiled and a spiritual light illumined your eyes. Blessed are you! Your five friends are really dead. You have conquered desires : you have won! Stay with me,—and bless me, every day. Your eyes behold the secret of life : your heart has a vision of the secret of wisdom. Feel no longer lonely. You look to me for fellowship and affection. Stay with me, brother! and purify the school with your presence. You will heal many hearts! And, in wisdom and love, you will heal many of those who stumble, alas! through the dark forest of this life!”

THE LORD ACCEPTS LITTLE GIFTS

One day, Junnuna is crossing a field. He finds it covered with snow. A man is near : he is throwing grains on the ground.

Junnuna asks :—“Brother, the ground is covered with snow : why do you throw grains of corn?”

The man answers :—“Yes, today the ground is covered with snow, and the birds know not where to go for food. For them I throw these grains on the ground. The birds will eat them, and God will bless me!”

Soon after, Junnuna goes to Mecca, and he sees the same man going round the Kaaba. Seeing Junnuna, the man says :—“How are you? You see how Allah has accepted my humble, little

service to the birds! I threw the grains on the ground : see the 'fruit' now! God has had mercy on me and has brought me to this holy place."

"Yes," said Junnuna, "the Lord accepts every little grain offered Him or to His creatures with devotion!"

So Sri Krishna says to Arjuna in the Gita :—
"A leaf, a flower, a fruit, a little water, I accept every little gift offered to Me with devotion."

DETACHMENT

Ahmed realised that God was the truth of life, and that the secret of spiritual life was known to him who refused to let any creature or any earthly thing stand as a barrier between him and God.

A friend wrote to him a letter and complained of lack of news from Ahmed. He was at his prayers, one day, and the memory of the letter flashed upon him. Then came to him the thought :—
"This letter-writing stands in the way of union with God!"

So he wrote to his friend :—"Kindly do not write to me in future, for I do not wish to write letters and forget God! I desire that you, too, should be absorbed in singing the Name of God. *Salaam!*"

Ahmed was a God-absorbed mystic!

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Pictures From Mystics

NEWS AND NOTES

By a "Pilgrim"

Beloved Dadaji's 91st Birthday :—Beloved Dada's (Sri T. L. Vaswani's) 91st birthday was celebrated at Poona in an atmosphere of rich devotion and enthusiasm. It was also celebrated at different places in India, including Bombay, Delhi, Lucknow, Secunderabad, and in some places outside India, including London, Jamaica, Chicago, Singapore and Djakarta.

At Poona, the programme commenced a week earlier and terminated on Dadaji's birthday (November 25). Over 300 pilgrims from different parts of India came to participate in the celebrations. They stayed in a "Camp" specially organised for the purpose. The "Camp,"—at which lodging and boarding was provided free,—was kept open for three days (Nov. 23-26).

Service of the Poor :—An important item in the programme was *seva*, service of the poor and broken ones. Every day, the poor were fed.

On November 24, blankets were distributed among about 500 needy sisters who had gathered on the occasion. In addition, they received help in cash as, also, some articles of daily use such as sugar, tea, soap, match boxes,—which were contributed by students of the Mira Institutions.

On November 25, thousands of *Daridra Narayanas* were fed and were given coins.

Birthday Purse :—At the evening meeting, on November 25, tributes of love and affection were paid to Beloved Dada and his noble work. A purse of Rs. 27,03,840=48 was dedicated to Beloved Dada. The Secretary of the Collection Committee, Shri Gangaram Sajandas, announced that the figure included amounts which had been promised but not yet received. The amount actually received was Rs. 4,79,552=48. The balance of over 22 lacs of rupees would be received in instalments. The major portion of the amount was earmarked by the donors for Sadhu Vaswani Vidya Nagar, the proposed centre of New Education to be built

Pictures From Mystics

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by the Brotherhood Association on the new property (admeasuring 7 1/2 acres) which had been purchased for the purpose by the Association for rupees twelve lacs.

Fellowship Meals :—On November 25, langar was held at 1 p. m. at which over 5,000 people had their meals. It was a heart-warming sight to see the people,—rich and poor, young and old,—eating together in an atmosphere of *nam-kirtan* (repetition of the Holy Name).

Dada Lila :—On the evening of November 23, students of St. Mira's Schools enacted on the stage moving scenes from the life of Beloved Dada. The programme, which lasted for three hours, was very inspiring. The huge pandal was filled to capacity.

New Publications :—Beloved Dada's three new publications were issued on the sacred occasion :—

(1) *Fragrant Flowers* (collection of Beloved Dada's inspiring thoughts) : published by Mira, 10 Sadhu Vaswani Path, Poona-1. Price : Re. 1/—.

(2) *Jivan Yatra* (in Sindhi) : published by Sant Mala, 10 Sadhu Vaswani Path, Poona-1. Price : Re. 1/—.

(3) *Bhagavad Gita* (in Sindhi rhymed verse) : published by Sant Mala. Price : Rs. 3/—.

Ratha Yatra :—The *Ratha Yatra*, the pilgrim procession, was taken out on the evening of November 24. Thousands of people,—men, women and children of different communities and walks of life,—joined in the procession which followed the *Ratha*, the chariot containing Beloved Dada's life-size picture. The procession, which started at 4.30 p. m. from Beloved Dada's sacred *samadhi*, went round various routes and terminated at the sacred shrine at about 9 p. m. Enthusiasm greeted the procession at every place. The roads were decorated with festoons and banners and illuminated with coloured lights. All along the route, the devoted pilgrims sang the Name of God in the fervour of love.

Annual Function :—The Annual Function of St. Mira's English Medium School was held on December 28. Shri Mohan Dharia, Minister for Planning, Government of India, was the Chief Guest. In his moving address, he eulogised the work of the Mira Movement in Education.

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